



**Testimony of The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity
Submitted to the Housing Committee
Thursday, March 10, 2022 ~ 12:00 PM via Zoom**

Senator Lopes, Representative Williams, Ranking Members Senator Cicarella and Representative Polletta, and other distinguished members of the Housing Committee; we are submitting joint testimony written by Megan Malloy – Yale School of Public Health Fellow & Thomas Nuccio Policy Analyst CGA's Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity (CWCSEO). We are pleased to submit our testimony **in support** of the following bills:

- S.B. No. 291 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR GROUP AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES
- S.B. No. 294 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.

Background and Importance of S.B. 291

The issue of early care has been long neglected in the United States. “Domestic work, including child care, has long been undervalued, in large part because of notions about race and women. The devaluing of people of color and women has been codified into local, state, Tribal, and federal policies over centuries, showing up in racist and sexist policies in the funding and structure of the ECE system.”

¹Many of the issues facing the early care workforce such as inadequate compensation of workers, and instability within the current system have been shaped by laws influencing race, gender, and class.

In Support of S.B. 291

The Commission supports S.B. 291 which addresses licensed family child care homes and group child care homes. This legislation intends to eliminate barriers to operating a family child care home. “The average price of child care in 2020 was \$10,174 per year, a 5% increase from 2019, according to the recent report from Child Care Aware of America...”²

If adopted, this bill would expand the number of licensed child care homes in communities around the state of Connecticut **by prohibiting any zoning regulation** that would treat any family child care home 3 [registered] or group child care home located in a residence and licensed by the Office of Early Childhood any differently than a single or multifamily dwelling.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood reported that in 2021 there were 1,942 licensed family and group child care homes operating within the state.³ The previous year, an existing shortage of 50,000 care slots for infants and toddlers was further compounded by the pandemic, with licensure being cited

¹ [Mary-Pauper Nov-2021.pdf \(earlyedcollaborative.org\)](#)

² [COVID-19 pandemic hurts struggling child care sector, legislators are told - UPI.com](#)

³ [Overview of Early Childhood Services in Connecticut | Office of Early Childhood](#)



as a limiting factor on increasing availability.⁴ Family and group child care homes also offer a lower cost option to families, a much needed benefit given Connecticut ranks as having the fifth highest child care costs in the country.

Child care like many issues has been exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has emphasized the need for child care facilities throughout the state. “As child care programs rapidly closed in the COVID-19 pandemic, the degree to which work is enabled by child care became obvious, particularly for the 14 percent of workers parenting a child under age 6. Analyses of data collected in May and June 2020 found that 13 percent of working parents lost a job or reduced their hours do to the lack of child care.”⁵

Areas of Improvement for S.B. 291

As previously mentioned, the Commission supports this bill but believes the issue of child care is much more nuanced and requires the Connecticut General Assembly to continue to consider the deeply embedded structural issues surrounding child care, such as workforce compensation, through an equitable lens, which would require “a more comprehensive transformation of the financing and organization of the ECE system in the U.S. Fragmentation of the system at local, state, Tribal, and federal levels.”⁶

Comprehensive reform to child care would include, at a minimum, the following:

- Adequate wages and benefits for child care workers
- Tax credits and wage supplement programs
- Reduction in the number of child care deserts throughout the state

Because this bill would begin by removing many obstacles and barriers to operating a family child care home and group child care home in our state and supporting the betterment of children and their families in difficult times, we urge adoption.

In Support of S.B. 294

The Commission supports S.B. 294 which prohibits landlords from taking actions against tenants based on a tenant’s family violence victim status. This legislation prevents the unlawful and unjust actions taken by landlords such as: demands for an increased rent, refusal to renew a rental agreement, decrease in any services, or any other discriminatory actions against the tenant.

This bill acknowledges that family violence frequently occurs throughout the state of Connecticut and cannot be ignored.

⁴ [Overview of Early Childhood Services in Connecticut | Office of Early Childhood](#)

⁵ [COVID-19 Didn’t Create a Child Care Crisis, But Hastened and Inflamed It | Carsey School of Public Policy | UNH](#)

⁶ [Mary-Pauper_Nov-2021.pdf \(earlyedcollaborative.org\)](#)



“As defined in Connecticut General Statute 46b-38a(1): "Family violence" means an incident resulting in physical harm, bodily injury or assault, or an act of threatened violence that constitutes fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, including, but not limited to, stalking or a pattern of threatening, between family or household members. Verbal abuse or argument shall not constitute family violence unless there is present danger and the likelihood that physical violence will occur. "Family violence crime" does not include acts by parents or guardians disciplining minor children unless such acts constitute abuse.”⁷

In fact, there were, “15,500 family violence incidents reported in CY 2020 involved 32,636 participants. Victims totaled 15,324 and offenders totals 13,879. A total of 3,433 individuals were involved in incidents where all participants were arrested. In these cases, “females were victim of 64.6 percent of all offenses (16,770)’ males were victim of 35.4 percent of all offenses (9,183).”⁸ We believe that this bill aims to protect the voices of these victims of family violence.

We urge passage of all the bills listed herewith.

CWCSEO is a nonpartisan legislative agency within the Connecticut General Assembly with a data driven, cross-cultural approach to policy innovation, promoting best practices, breaking barriers, and helping to build a more equitable and accessible state for all Connecticut residents.

Thank you,
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The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, *Fellow*

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⁷ [2020-Family-Violence-Arrest-Report.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)

⁸ [2020-Family-Violence-Arrest-Report.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)